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LSSU'S NELLIS, NMU'S BEAULIEU, MTU'S KERO AND BSU'S SOMOZA NAMED WCHA PLAYERS OF THE WEEK FOR GAMES OF FEB. 9-10, 2018

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. – Feb. 12, 2018 – A late-game scoring hero, a stalwart blueliner, a senior netminder that stepped up in a big way and a rookie who lit the lamp for the first time highlight the Players of the Week in the men's Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA). The honorees for games of Feb. 9-10, 2018 are: Lake Superior State junior **Anthony Nellis** (Offensive), Northern Michigan sophomore **Philip Beaulieu** (Defensive), Michigan Tech senior **Devin Kero** (Goaltender) and Bemidji State freshman forward **Ethan Somoza** (Rookie).

WCHA Offensive Player of the Week

Anthony Nellis, Jr., Lake Superior State (Breakeyville, Québec)

With Lake Superior State fighting for its WCHA postseason life, it was Nellis who twice played the late-game hero, scoring a pair of tie-breaking, game-winning goals in the Lakers' road sweep at Alaska Anchorage. Friday night, the junior buried a one-timer 2:10 into overtime to give LSSU a 3-2, series-opening win. After assisting on his team's first goal Saturday, the Breakeyville, Québec native broke a 1-1 deadlock 6:34 into the third period, lifting the Lakers to a 2-1 triumph. While a pair of losses would have eliminated LSSU, the sweep moves the Lakers within one point of the WCHA's eighth and final playoff spot (along with two points back of seventh place and three out of sixth). Nellis finished the weekend with three points and a plus-2 rating, while his two game-winning goals tied for the NCAA lead. This is Nellis' first career WCHA weekly award.

Honorable Mention: Jordan Heller, Sr., Bemidji State (had four points, including a WCHA-best three goals, in the Beavers' road split at Michigan Tech); **Joel L'Esperance, Sr., Michigan Tech** (tied for the WCHA lead with three assists, including a pair of helpers in the Huskies' 5-1 win Saturday vs. Bemidji State); **Marc Michaelis, So., Minnesota State** (led the WCHA and tied for third nationally with five points, tallying two goals and three assists in the No. 5 Mavericks' road sweep at Alabama Huntsville); **Denver Pierce, Jr., Northern Michigan** (scored the OT winner Friday and assisted on the game-winner Saturday, part of a three-point series as the now-No. 17 Wildcats swept Alaska).

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WCHA Defensive Player of the Week

Philip Beaulieu, So., Northern Michigan (Duluth, Minn.)

Beaulieu tied for the WCHA lead with a plus-4 rating, while tying for tops among league defensemen with two assists and two points, helping now-No. 17 Northern Michigan sweep visiting Alaska. The sophomore from Duluth, Minn. tallied both his assists in a 4-1 victory Saturday, helping to set up a pair of third-period goals after the NMU lead had been cut to 2-1. Beaulieu also blocked a pair of shots, while he was on the ice for five of the Wildcats' six goals in the series. This is Beaulieu's second career WCHA weekly award, both of which have come this season (also on Jan. 22).

Honorable Mention: Mark Auk, Sr., Michigan Tech (tied for the WCHA defenseman scoring lead with two points, netting a power-play goal and an assist in the Huskies' 5-1 win Saturday over Bemidji State).

WCHA Goaltender of the Week

Devin Kero, Sr., Michigan Tech (Hancock, Mich.)

Kero played in just one game last week, but made sure it was a special one, earning Winter Classic MVP honors after stopping 36-of-37 shots in Michigan Tech's 5-1 win over Bemidji State on Saturday. The senior from Hancock, Mich. turned aside all 19 shots he faced in the third period, allowing the Huskies to capture their sixth-straight MacInnes Cup by weekend goal differential (7-5, after BSU won 4-2 on Friday). Kero tied for fourth in the WCHA for saves despite playing just one game, while his .973 save percentage for that conference was best in the league last weekend. This is Kero's first career WCHA weekly award.

Honorable Mention: Atte Tolvanen, Jr., Northern Michigan (led the WCHA with an 0.99 goals-against average and tied for tops with two wins, backstopping the now-No. 17 Wildcats to a sweep of Alaska).

WCHA Rookie of the Week

Ethan Somoza, Fr., F, Bemidji State (Simi Valley, Calif.)

Somoza tied for the WCHA rookie scoring lead with two points, while his only shot of the weekend resulted in his first career goal – the game-winner in Bemidji State's 4-2 win Friday at Michigan Tech. Playing in his 27th collegiate game, the freshman from Simi Valley, Calif. buried an even-strength goal to give the Beavers a 3-1 lead at 12:05 of the second period. He also assisted on BSU's first goal of the game. Somoza finished the series with a plus-2 rating (tied for second among WCHA rookies), helping the Beavers leave Houghton with a two-point lead in the race for the fourth and final home ice slot in the WCHA quarterfinals. This is Somoza's first WCHA weekly award of his freshman season.

Honorable Mention: Seamus Donohue, Fr., D, Michigan Tech (tied for the WCHA defenseman and rookie lead with two points and two assists, while collecting five blocked shots in the Huskies' split with Bemidji State); **Dallas Gerads, Fr., F, Minnesota State** (tied for the WCHA rookie scoring lead with two points, tallying an assist and the game-winning goal Saturday as the No. 5 Mavericks swept host Alabama Huntsville); **Mareks Mitens, Fr., G, Lake Superior State** (made 22 saves Saturday in his lone appearance, backstopping the Lakers to a 2-1 win and series sweep at Alaska Anchorage); **Joseph Nardi, Fr., F, Northern Michigan** (scored a power-play goal Friday and had an assist Saturday, tying for the WCHA rookie lead with two points during the now-No. 17 Wildcats' sweep of visiting Alaska).

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About the Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA)

The Western Collegiate Hockey Association, among the most historic, tradition-rich and successful conferences in all of collegiate athletics, will proudly mark its 66th season of men’s competition in 2017-18. The 10-team Division 1 conference consists of the University of Alabama in Huntsville (Chargers), the University of Alaska Anchorage (Seawolves), the University of Alaska (Nanooks), Bemidji State University (Beavers), Bowling Green State University (Falcons), Ferris State University (Bulldogs), Lake Superior State University (Lakers), Michigan Technological University (Huskies), Minnesota State University (Mavericks) and Northern Michigan University (Wildcats). For more information, visit wcha.com.

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